On account of Eid al-Adha (Bakrid), Salar Digital English Daily will remain closed on Saturday, 7 June, 2025. There will be no edition dated 8 June, 2025.

Wishing you and your family a joyful and blessed

Eid al Adha Bakrid

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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

ساڈھ روزنامہ بنگلور

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RBI slashes repo rates by 50bps to help push economy

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra arrives for the post-monetary policy press conference, in Mumbai on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut interest rates by more than expected 50 basis points on Friday, a third consecutive reduction, and unexpectedly reduced the cash reserve ratio for banks to provide a major liquidity fillip to support the economy.

The RBI's six-member monetary policy committee, headed by Governor Sanjay Malhotra and consisting of three external members, voted five to one to lower the benchmark repurchase or repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.5 per cent. It also cut the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points to 3 per cent, adding Rs 2.5 lakh crore to already surplus liquidity in the banking system.

5.5% REPO RATE

With the third consecutive reduction, the RBI has now cut interest rates by a total of 100 basis points in 2025. It also cut the cash reserve by 100 basis points to 3 per cent

With the latest reduction, RBI has now cut interest rates by a total of 100 basis points in 2025, starting with a quarter-point reduction in February - the first cut since May 2020 - and another similar-sized cut in April.

At the same time, the RBI changed its monetary policy stance to "neutral" from accommodative, with Malhotra saying further action will depend on incoming data.

The RBI Governor said inflation or price rise has softened significantly over the last six months from above the tolerance band in October 2024 to well below the target, with signs of a broad-based moderation. Growth, on the other hand, remains lower than aspiration amid a challenging global environment and heightened uncertainty.

"Thus, it is imperative to continue to stimulate domestic private consumption and investment through policy levers to step up the growth momentum," he said. "This changed growth-inflation dynamics calls for not only continuing with the policy easing but also frontloading the rate cuts to support growth."

The rate cut comes as the Indian economy slowed to a four-year low of 6.5 per cent in the fiscal year that ended March. *—PTI*

PM launches world's highest bridge, will visit G7

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first direct train service to the Kashmir Valley, a project featuring the world's highest arched railway bridge over the Chenab River, the Anji Rail Bridge, the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project and flagged off Vande Bharat trains. At a height of 359m, the bridge is 35m (114ft) taller than the Eiffel Tower. The bridge was constructed at a cost of Rs 14.86 billion. The rail link is part of a 272km route. , Modi also said he will be attending the G7 Summit later this month in Canada and that he looked forward to meeting his newly elected Canadian counterpart Mark Carney. Carney called up Modi as the Indian Prime Minister thanked him for the invite to the Summit in Kananaskis. *—PTI*

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Bangladesh to hold elections by April next year: Yunus

DHAKA, 6 JUNE

Bangladesh's Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus on Friday announced that the national election will be held in the first half of April next year, according to a media report. The announcement comes amid recent protests by the former premier Khaleda Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) demanding elections by December this year. During a televised address to the nation, Yunus said the Election Commission will provide a detailed roadmap in due course. "There is immense public and political interest regarding the timing of the election. As I've said before, it will be held between December and June. The government is working to ensure an environment conducive to a credible election within this timeframe," he said. *—PTI*

CM political Secy sacked, ADGP Intel transferred

4 RCB officials held, including manager Nikhil Sosale

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday removed his close aide and political secretary K Govindaraj, a day after top heads in the Bengaluru commissioner's office rolled with the commissioner B Dayanand being suspended in connection with the 11 deaths due to stampede at the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

The government also transferred Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Intelligence, Hemant Nimbalkar.

Sources close to Siddaramaiah told Salar News that Govindaraj was ``sacked'' as the CM was upset with the latter's statements to the media.

Govindaraj told the media that he had advised Siddaramaiah not to hold the felicitation for the Royal Challengers Bengaluru team on the steps of Vidhana Soudha.

Meanwhile, four officials of RCB and event management firm DNA Entertainment Private Limited were arrested. Nikhil Sosale, Head of Marketing and Revenue of RCB, Sunil Mathew and Kiran Kumar from DNA Entertainment Pvt Ltd are among those who have been arrested, sources said.

Four of the accused RCB members taken into custody by Cubbon Park police, in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Some of them were reportedly taken into custody from the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA).

They were brought to Cubbon Park police station for questioning, sources said.

Bengaluru Police Commissioner Seemanth Kumar Singh said "Our teams are taking up the case very seriously, and ultimately the case has to go to CID."

The issue propped up before the Karnataka High Court, when it granted key office bearers of the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) interim protection from arrest.

Justice SR Krishna Kumar, who heard the petition seeking to quash the FIR against the KSCA office-bearers, restrained the police from taking any coercive action against the officials until the next hearing. The petition will be taken up again on 16 June.

Senior advocates Ashok Haranahalli and Shyam Sundar represented the KSCA, while Advocate General Shashi Kiran Shetty appeared on behalf of the State.

Haranahalli raised concern over the Sosale's arrest, claiming it indicated a targeted approach. The AG responded that Sosale had been apprehended at the airport while allegedly attempting to flee to Dubai.

The plea submitted by KSCA argued that the FIR against them was a "knee-jerk" reaction by police under pressure.

Meanwhile, HM Venkatesh, an activist, approached the Cubbon Park Police Station seeking to make Virat Kohli the main accused of an FIR. *—Salar news with agencies*

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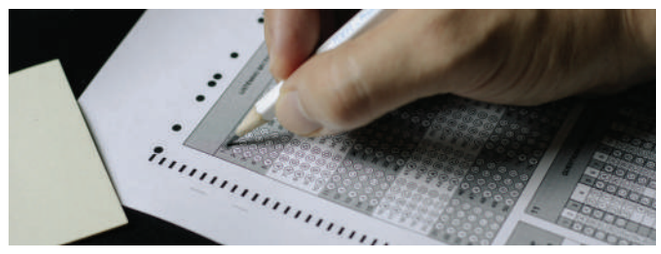

SC allows NBE to hold NEET-PG 2025 exam on 3 Aug

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Friday allowed the National Board of Examination (NBE) to conduct on 3 August, the NEET-PG 2025 exam in one shift in line with the top court's directions.

A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Augustine George Masih, which initially questioned the over two-month window sought by the NBE for holding the examination, said the board's plea appeared to be "bonafide".

However, no further time would be granted to NBE for holding NEET-PG 2025 examination.

The NBE said for holding the simultaneous examinations for 2,42,679 candidates all over in one shift required 1,000 examination centres.

The board would hold the examination, scheduled on 15 June between 9 am and 12.30 pm on 3 August, which was the earliest possible date given by their technology partner Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS).

- A bench of Justices Prashant Kumar Mishra and Augustine George Masih said that the exams must be conducted in one single shift and no further time would be granted

The bench questioned the long duration for holding the examination saying that students, who have prepared very hard for the examination, would face the brunt, with their selection process getting delayed.

It questioned what the board had done so far as the top court had on 30 May ordered it to conduct the post-graduate medical entrance exam scheduled on 15 June in a single shift.

Justice Masih said the court very well knew that TCS had experience of various examinations and finding such centres would not be a problem. *—PTI*

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BAKRID IS HERE

A vendor with his goats waits for customers at a livestock market ahead of Eid al-Adha, which begins today, in Kolkata, West Bengal **PHOTO: PTI**

Hajj sees lowest turnout in 30 years, excluding the pandemic

ISLAMABAD, 6 JUNE

The Hajj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia this year attracted the lowest number of participants in three decades, excluding the Covid-19 pandemic years, according to figures released by the country's Hajj Ministry. A total of 1,673,230 Muslims attended, a decline of nearly 160,000 from the previous year

and significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels, which often exceeded 2 million attendees. The peak was in 2012, when over 3.16 million pilgrims took part.

Although the 2023 Hajj was the first without pandemic-related restrictions since 2020.

Economic challenges and inflation facing many countries may have rendered the pilgrimage unaffordable for many. *—PTI*

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PUBLIC BREAKUP

TRUMP IS NOW ELON'S 'X'

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

The public breakdown between US President Donald Trump and Tesla CEO Elon Musk heated exponentially on Thursday. It transformed what was once a seemingly powerful alliance into a vicious war of words that wiped billions from Tesla's market value and threatens to derail the President's flagship legislation.

The feud got nastier less than a week after Musk officially left his position spearheading the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). It reached its peak when Musk brought back claims about Trump's connection to alleged sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein, making the personal political.

Trump, during an Oval Office meeting with German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, claimed that Musk was upset regarding the Electric Vehicle (EV) mandates in his "Big Beautiful Bill".

"I've always liked Elon and that's why I was very surprised...I'd rather have him criticise me than the Bill."

Trump added that Musk knew the Bill "better than anyone", while the SpaceX head termed that account as "false".

He claimed Trump would have "lost the election" and bemoaning what he called "such ingratitude".

PHOTO: AI/FREEPIK

I'm very disappointed in Elon. He knew every aspect of this Bill. He knew it better than almost anybody, and he never had a problem until right after he left... I've helped Elon a lot

Donald Trump, US President

False, this Bill was never shown to me even once and was passed in the dead of night so fast that almost no one in Congress could even read it!

Elon Musk, Ex-DOGE head

Trump responded on Truth Social, stating, "The easiest way to save money in our budget, billions and billions of Dollars, is to terminate Elon's Governmental Subsidies and Contracts. I was always surprised that Biden didn't do it".

As the feud intensified, Musk suggested Trump should be impeached and that JD Vance should replace him. Musk also warned that Trump's tariffs would "cause a recession in the second half of this year" . *—ANI*

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STARLINK GETS LICENCE TO START INDIA SERVICES

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Elon Musk's Starlink received a licence from the telecom department for providing satellite internet services in India, a key milestone that will take it closer towards launching commercial operations in the country.

Starlink is the third company after Eutelsat OneWeb and Jio Satellite Communications to get a licence from the Department of Telecommunications to provide satellite internet services in the country.

A fourth applicant, Amazon's Kuiper is still waiting for the approval.

DoT sources confirmed on Friday that Starlink has indeed received the licence and said the company will be granted trial spectrum in 15-20 days of applying for it.

Starlink will now have to comply with the security norms such as providing access for lawful interception, before starting services.

The licence from DoT came nearly a month after the Starlink was issued a letter of intent (LoI) by the telecom department.

However, the status of the Starlink's final nod from the Indian space regulator, In-SPACe could not be immediately ascertained. *—PTI*

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KSCA sought permit for Soudha event

A letter sent to the govt reveals permission was sought; HC stops cops from taking action

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

The Karnataka State Cricket Association had sought permission for RCB's IPL trophy celebrations at Vidhana Soudha, a letter sent by it to the State government has revealed, reaffirming KSCA's assertion that it facilitated approvals for the franchise that is under fire following 11 deaths in a stampede outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium.

After an FIR was lodged against them, KSCA President Raghuram Bhat, Secretary A Shankar and treasurer ES Jayaram submitted in the Karnataka High Court that the gate management and crowd management were not the responsibility of the association.

A letter from the KSCA to the government on 3 June, which has been accessed by PTI, reveals that the cricket unit sought permission for festivities at the Vidhana Soudha by DNA Entertainment Networks. The KSCA stated that the concerned company would "make necessary arrangements" for the event.

While the felicitation at the Vidhana Soudha passed off without any major glitch, chaos erupted outside the Chinnaswamy Stadium where lakhs converged following RCB's social media invitation, which was eventually deleted. A planned victory parade had to be cancelled but the function inside the stadium proceeded despite the tragedy that unfolded outside.

Chaos erupted outside Chinnaswamy Stadium where lakhs converged following RCB's social media invite, which was later deleted *PHOTO: PTI*

The KSCA has pleaded in the state HC that there is "absolutely no wrong that can be attributed to the Petitioner Committee or its office bearers as they stand aloof of any liabilities against the entire unfortunate incident."

Justice SR Krishna Kumar, who heard the petition seeking to quash the FIR against the KSCA office-bearers, restrained the police from taking any coercive action against the officials until the next hearing.

The High Court has also taken suo motu cognisance of the tragic incident and has asked the state to file a status report. It will be heard on June 10.

Meanwhile, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Friday accused the Opposition BJP and JD(S) of doing politics over "dead bodies", as he hit out at them for demanding his resignation.

Speaking to reporters, he said, "Karnataka State Cricket Association wrote (to the government) seeking permission.... I had gone to the airport (to receive the RCB team). I requested them to cooperate as there was no permission for the victory procession. I gave them a Kannada flag and welcomed them. What's wrong? What crime have I committed?"

On criticism about going ahead with the RCB celebration despite having information about deaths, Shivakumar said, "I had no information, I'm telling you..."

The Opposition BJP and JD(S) too lashed out at Congress government for making police officers the "scapegoats" for the stampede and alleged that the entire responsibility for the incident lies with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. They also demanded their resignation.

Defending the suspension of Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda and other police officials, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said, " Prima facie those responsible, who have not fulfilled their responsibility properly have been suspended." *— PTI*

> **What do they have to target me? In what way am I responsible?... The event was held. I'm Bengaluru Minister.....I had also gone to the stadium as the Bengaluru Minister**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Bengaluru Minister

> **If even 1 per cent of the effort put into Congress rallies had been made here, young lives could have been saved...The police carried injured youths to hospitals, but no Congress workers were present. Yet, the police have been suspended**
>
> -R Ashoka, Leader of Opposition

Activist Krishna files complaint against CM, DyCM

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Social activist Snehamayi Krishna on Friday has filed a complaint with Cubbon Park police station against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy CM Shivakumar and Karnataka Cricket Association office bearers in connection with the Chinnaswamy stampede.

"This is a tragedy caused by the government's irresponsibility. RCB is not a team representing the State. It is a private team bought by liquor vendors. In such a situation, the State government did not need to invite them and felicitate them," Krishna said.

He alleged that the tragedy was caused by the hastily organised programme in front of the Vidhana Soudha without any preparation.

"This case should be taken seriously. The police have registered a UDR (Unnatural Death Report). This is not the right action. A case should be registered under 106 of the Indian Penal Code." *—ANI*

Peppa Pig is back in Bengaluru on 7, 8 June

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

'Peppa Pig's Adventure', will be showcased at Prestige Centre for Performing Arts in Bengaluru on 7 and 8 June. This is the second time for Peppa Pig in Bengaluru. Last year too, Meherzad Patel, directed a stage adaptation of the British preschool animated television series created by Neville Astley and Mark Baker, was shown here, apart from Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai and Ahmedabad. "It's unfortunate that in India live shows don't run for extended periods of time like Broadway shows do. So, by the time people hear about them, they are already gone," Patel said. This year, apart from Bengaluru, 'Peppa Pig's Adventure' will also be staged in Chandigarh, Indore, Kolkata and Goa, he said. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Cong picks Ramesh Babu, Mattu for Legislative Council

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

The Congress high command is reported to have approved the names of candidates to the Karnataka Legislative Council, for four seats which have been vacant since 2023.

According to sources the names of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee media department chief **Ramesh Babu**, NRI forum chairperson Aarathi Krishna, senior journalist Dinesh Amin Mattu, who was media advisor to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah from 2013 to 2018 and President of the Dalit Sangarsha Samithi DG Sagar, have been approved.

The names will be sent to Raj Bhavan for Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot for his scrutiny. It may be recalled that two of the four seats have remained vacant since October 2023, another since November 2023, and the last in January 2024.

—Salar News

CM irked as aide says he advised against event

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah removed political secretary K Govindraj on Friday over his role in the RCB felicitation, where a stampede claimed 11 lives and injured 56 others.

"`In continuation of government order on 1 June, 2023, Govindaraj who had been appointed as the Chief Minister's Political Secretary, is hereby withdrawn from the said position with immediate effect," the government notification said. "Accordingly, Govindaraj is relieved from the political secretary's post with immediate effect.

"Govindaraj was instrumental for holding the event on the Vidhana Soudha steps. Siddaramaiah reluctantly agreed after Govindaraj arranged a meeting of the DNA event managers and representatives of Karnataka State Cricket Association with the Chief Minister. Govindaraj also ensured the police commissioner B Dayanand (now suspended) and Chief Secretary Shalini Rajneesh met the CM in connection with the celebrations," sources said. "How can he do a turnaround now and say he advised the CM against holding the event? It's totally unacceptable and Siddaramaiah took it seriously and is very upset with him."

Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: PTI*

Sources said that Govindaraj, who is also an MLC, and other comments that he has nothing to do with cricket and he is the president of State Olympics Federation did not go down well with the CM. The DNA Entertainment Network representatives have also given a statement that they were approached by Govindaraj to hold the victory celebrations on Vidhana Soudha steps, they added. Siddaramaiah has now only one political secretary, Naseer Ahmed.

—Salar News

Priority is to build confidence: New City Top Cop

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Just hours after taking charge as the City Police Commissioner, Seemant Kumar Singh on Friday said the main priority is to build confidence among the people and provide a peaceful environment for them to stay here.

Singh, a 1996 batch IPS officer took charge as Bengaluru's top cop late night on Thursday, after State Chief Minister Siddaramaiah suspended City Police Commissioner B Dayananda and other officers for dereliction of duty in connection with Wednesday's stampede.

He said, "It's a difficult situation, no doubt. But basic policing is my priority, and I'll be discussing with my officers and (will take note of) the feedback given by the public and press. And based on that, I'll take up the issues." Singh was Additional Director General of Police, Bengaluru Metropolitan Task Force. *—PTI*

CO-OP BANK FRAUD

ED attaches Rs 14 cr assets linked to bank scam

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has seized assets worth approximately Rs 14 crore belonging to RM Manjunatha Gowda, the former chairman of a Karnataka-based cooperative bank, in connection with an alleged gold loan scam linked to money laundering.

Gowda, along with his wife, is currently in judicial custody since his arrest in April, following extensive raids conducted by the agency.

The ED's action involves the attachment of both movable and immovable properties valued at Rs 13.91 crore under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). This investigation stems from allegations made by the Karnataka Police, indicating that B Shobha, a former branch manager of the Shimoga District Cooperative Central Bank, conspired with others to misappropriate bank funds amounting to about Rs 62.77 crore.

Authorities allege that Shobha opened fraudulent gold loan accounts sans the knowledge of the legitimate account holders, employing fake and forged documentation. The ED's findings indicate that a significant misappropriation of funds occurred at the bank's city branch, primarily orchestrated by Shobha under Gowda's instruction.

The agency contends that the "proceeds of crime" generated through this conspiracy were laundered and subsequently transferred to Gowda, who reportedly acquired various assets that are disproportionate to his known income streams, according to a chargesheet filed by the Lokayukta Police. *—PTI*

Lokayukta nabs officer for bribery

A senior official of the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board was allegedly caught in the act on Friday while accepting a bribe of Rs 1.5 lakh, according to officials. Narendra Kumar, 51, who holds the position of survey supervisor at KIADB in Bengaluru, was apprehended following a trap set by Lokayukta police. The action was initiated after complainant Ravi reported that the official demanded a bribe. *—PTI*

Mentally challenged to get care centres

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

The State government approved establishment of care centres for mentally challenged in Chitradurga, Yadgir, Kolar, and Bidar districts, with a grant limit of Rs 6 crore.

The centres will be established in collaboration with NGO Aaladamara Foundation, said an order issued by the health department on Friday.

It was declared in the Budget 2025, care centres for mentally ill persons will be established at district-level hospitals in the state in collaboration with NGOs.

The order issued on Friday stated that in the remaining 27 districts, too, care centres will be established at district-level hospitals in collaboration with NGOs.

According to the Mental Health Care Act 2017, it is the duty of a police officer to protect persons found wandering aimlessly on the streets, as these individuals are at risk of causing harm to themselves or others or creating public nuisance due to their mental state.

"Due to challenges in accessing nearby mental health services, thousands of mentally ill persons leave their homes and become homeless every year. Identifying mentally ill persons among the homeless and bringing them to a safe place is a key function of the system," added the preamble to the order. *—PTI*

Cabinet approves Quantum Research Park phase 2 at IISc

BENGALURU, 6 JUNE

Karnataka Minister for Electronics and IT/BT Priyank Kharge said the State cabinet approved the plan to establish Quantum Research Park phase-2 at IISc in City.

Taking to X, Kharge announced that with a government grant of Rs 48 crore, the park will be developed in partnership with the Foundation for Science, Innovation and Development (FSID).

"This initiative will strengthen Karnataka's leadership in quantum research, skill-building and innovation. It will offer a collaborative space for academia, startups and industry to work on cutting-edge quantum technologies," he wrote.

The park is set to be situated in Indian Institute of Science (IISc) will provide world-class quantum technology research and product development facilities, he said.

It will also be a state-of-the-art training centre to upskill youth, reskill professionals and train faculty, he added.

"This initiative is expected to attract FDI, boost IP creation and open up new economic frontiers in areas like cybersecurity, climate modeling, pharmaceuticals and finance," said Kharge. *—PTI*

Farmers threaten to boycott Mysuru film city over land

MYSURU, 6 JUNE

Hundreds of farmers under the banner of Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha and Hasiru Sene, led by farmer leaders Hosakote Basavaraju and Ugranarasimhe gowda, on Friday held protests in Himmavu Industrial area, urging the district administration to release compensation for the land acquired by the KIADB to set up a film city in Himmavu Industrial area in Nanjangud taluk.

The protesters shouted slogans against the State government for the delay in releasing compensation for the farmers. They threatened to intensify their stir, besides, they would not allow the government to carry out the initial stages of filmcity development works it started in the area.

- The protesters shouted slogans against the State government for the delay in releasing compensation for the farmers

Addressing the protesters, Hosakote Basavaraju accused the State government of acquiring hundreds of acres of government land cultivated by farmers over 60 to 70 years through Karnataka Industrial Area DevelopmentBoard in Himmavu, Adakanahalli, Hulimavu, and nearby villages.

The state government has acquired their land and set up a film city after promising them to provide compensation and jobs for land losers. So far, the government has failed to fulfil their demand, he said. Nanjangud tahsildar Shivakumar visited the spot.

—Salar News

FEAR OF FLOODS

Damaged dam gate gives ryots jitters

HOSAPETE, 6 JUNE

The farmers of Raichur, Koppal, Vijayanagara, and Hosapete are uncertain whether they can grow crops this season. All thanks to a damaged crest gate No. 19 at Tungabhadra dam, which has not been fixed since 2023. The gate was partially washed away on 10 August, 2023.

The Karnataka Niravari Nigam Ltd allotted the project of installing all 32 crest gates, including the damaged one, to Hyderabad-based Hardware Tools and Machinery Projects (HTMP) company.

Gujarat-based Anar and HTMP, and Telangana-based Sapna and Bekam companies participated in the e-tender bid. Thenigam fixed Rs 52 crore as the tender amount, and the HTMP company was given the work that bid for Rs 41.42 crore. It was to complete the work within 15 months. The project was taken up after experts from Hyderabad-based NDT services had advised the replacement of the crest gates installed in 1953.

The damaged crest gate **No. 19** at Tungabhadra dam is not yet fixed, even though it was partially washed away in 2023

Karnataka Niravari Nigam Ltd allotted the project of installing all 32 crest gates to HTMP *PHOTO: ANI*

- Tungabhadra reservoir supplies water to nine districts in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana feeding water to about16.5 lakh acres of land

The Managing Director (MD) of Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Ltd, Rajesh Aminbavi informed the Central Water Commission(CWC) is responsible for approving gate work and coordinating among the three states – Karnataka, Andra Pradesh and Telangana.

The Tungabhadra reservoir supplies water to nine districts in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana feeding water to about16.5 lakh acres of land. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: ANI

New mango variety named after Defence Min

LUCKNOW, 6 JUNE

Padma Shri awardee Kalimullah Khan, popularly known as India's "Mango Man", has named a newly developed mango variety Rajnath Aam in honour of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Grown using his unique grafting method in Malihabad, Lucknow, Khan said he names mangoes after individuals who have served the nation with distinction. Khan praised Singh as a balanced leader who prefers peace over conflict, especially in the wake of the Pahalgam attack. Now in his 80s, Khan has created over 300 mango varieties, including those named after Aishwarya Rai, Sachin Tendulkar, and Modi. *—PTI*

Influencer Panoli released after court grants bail

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

Social media influencer and law student Sharmistha Panoli was released from prison on Friday after the Calcutta High Court granted her interim bail. The 22-year-old was arrested last week by Kolkata Police in Gurugram following a complaint over alleged communal remarks in a social media video. The court observed that the complaint did not reveal any cognisable offence and granted her bail on a Rs 10,000 bond, directing her to cooperate with the investigation and not leave India without permission. Her arrest sparked political tensions, with the BJP accusing the West Bengal government of bias. *—PTI*

Gujarat Cong leader arrested for 'misleading' posts

AHMEDABAD, 6 JUNE

Gujarat Congress leader Rajesh Soni was arrested by CID's Cyber Crime Cell over social media posts on "Operation Sindoor". He is accused of sharing misleading content that could harm military morale and endanger national sovereignty. Booked under tough BNS sections, his arrest was condemned by Congress, which said Soni merely demanded credit for soldiers over political publicity. *—PTI*

TMC MLA brands Op Sindoor as BJP warmongering

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

TMC MLA Narendranath Chakraborty has sparked controversy by calling Operation Sindoor a "warmongering game" by the BJP and accusing PM Modi of playing with patriotic emotions. The BJP filed an FIR against him, alleging he belittled the armed forces. While BJP leaders demand an NIA probe, TMC minister Chandrima Bhattacharya said the remarks were Chakraborty's personal views and not the party's stance. *—PTI*

OMAR TAKES UP STATEHOOD WITH MODI

Modi accuses Pakistan of targeting 'insaniyat and Kashmiriyat' through terror attacks

KATRA, 6 JUNE

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday raked up the issue of restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir at the flagging off of the maiden train to Kashmir by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in this pilgrim town.

"There are four persons on this stage who were present at the inauguration of the Katra railway station (in 2014). You had just won the election, becoming the Prime Minister for the first time. MoS in PMO Jeetendra Singh was present then and our LG Manoj Sinha sahib was discharging duties as MoS Railways and I was here as chief minister.

"If you see, by the blessings of Mata (Vaishno Devi) Sinha has got a promotion and I had a demotion. I was chief minister of a state and now I am a CM of the UT. However, I believe that it will not take long to rectify it .... Jammu and Kashmir will again get the statehood under your watch only," Abdullah said.

The erstwhile state was reorganised into the Union territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

Abdullah said many people have dreamt of seeing a train chugging into Kashmir.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during a public meeting at Katra, in Reasi district of J&K PHOTO: PTI

Abdullah paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for declaring the train to Kashmir a project of national importance.

Additionally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused Pakistan of targeting "insaniyat and Kashmiriyat" through the terror attack in Pahalgam, saying the assault was "orchestrated with the sinister intent of inciting communal riots in India and robbing the impoverished, tourism-dependent Kashmiris of their livelihood".

Addressing a huge rally here after inaugurating the first direct train service to the Kashmir Valley, a project featuring the world's highest arched railway bridge over the Chenab River and India's first cable-stayed Anji bridge, the prime minister said "our neighbouring country stands against humanity, social harmony, and economic prosperity." *– PTI*

WORLD'S HIGHEST RAILWAY ARCH IS HERE

KATRA, 6 JUNE

With the flagging of the Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat Express by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Friday shared eight notable features of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link project. In a post on X, Vaishnaw described the project as a "remarkable feat of engineering". It includes India's longest transportation tunnel, T-50 world's highest railway arch—Chenab Bridge, and country's first cable-stayed rail bridge—Anji Bridge. It also includes 36 main and eight escape tunnels. IISc Bangalore on X thanked Professor Madhavi Latha and her team for their hardwork and contribution to the Chenab Bridge. *—PTI*

Bihar has become crime capital of India: Rahul

RAJGIR/GAYAJI, 6 JUNE

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday slammed the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government in Bihar over the law-and-order situation in hi state, alleging that it has turned into the "crime capital of India".

Addressing the Samvidhan Suraksha Sammelan in Rajgir, Gandhi took a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "remaining silent" on US President Donald Trump's claims of brokering peace between India and Pakistan during the military conflict.

"Bihar, once considered the land of peace and justice, has now turned into the crime capital of India," he said.

Gandhi also said he was apprehensive whether the Centre could properly conduct the caste census with no

officers from the OBC, Dalit or tribal communities finalising the questionnaire.

"The Modi government will never conduct a real caste census, because the day they conduct a real caste census, their politics will end. There are two models of caste census – a BJP model and the Telangana model. In the BJP model, officers will decide the questions in a closed room. No officers from the OBC, Dalit or tribal communities are there in the select group of officers", said Gandhi.

"I am fighting for the caste census to save the Constitution... Wherever we form government in future, we will remove the 50 per cent cap on reservations. It will start from Bihar," he said.

"The PM used to say in every speech: 'I belong to OBC'. Then on the caste census, they say that there is no caste in India," Gandhi said. *—PTI*

UNWAVERING UNITED STAND

Indian delegation to meet US Deputy Secretary of State

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

US Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau will on Friday meet the multi-party Indian delegation that will brief him about the threat of terrorism faced by India and New Delhi's strong stand against the global menace.

The Indian parliamentarians, led by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, arrived here on 3 June to hold meetings with US lawmakers, top government officials, think tanks, policy experts and media as part of India's global outreach in the wake of 22 April Pahalgam terror attack that saw 26 dead.

The delegation met US Vice President JD Vance on Thursday in the White House, with Tharoor telling PTI it was an "excellent meeting".

U.S.-India deepen strategic and economic partnership says Indian Parliamentary delegation PHOTO: X/SASI THAROOR

Meanwhile, a top German official on Friday told a multi-party Indian delegation, which conveyed India's unwavering united stand for zero-tolerance for terrorism and outlined its resolve to not give in to nuclear blackmail, that the country stands with India in the fight against terrorism.

The delegation, led by BJP MP Ravi Shankar Prasad, met the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of German Parliament "Bundestag", Armin Laschet, and lawmakers Ralph Brinkhaus and Hubertus Heil here. *—PTI*

TMC holds protest rally over Mamata's remarks

KOLKATA, 6 JUNE

The women's wing of the TMC on Friday held a march in south Kolkata to protest against alleged derogatory remarks by BJP leaders about West Bengal Chief Minister and party supremo Mamata Banerjee, prompting a fresh political slugfest between the two arch-rivals in the state.

The rally, led by state finance minister and TMC women's wing president Chandrima Bhattacharya. During the rally, TMC Mahila Morcha members shouted slogans against what they described as the "continued vilification of a democratically elected woman chief minister".

West Bengal Minister and TMC leader Shashi Panja, who also participated in the rally, said, "The BJP and its leaders are leaving no stone unturned

to humiliate Mamata Banerjee. Humiliating her is equivalent to humiliating every woman in this state. That's why we are protesting. Their remarks are defamatory. If they cannot fight this political battle, they should not stoop to this low and make these kinds of defamatory comments."

TMC said remarks by BJP leaderscame in response to Mamata Banerjee's sharp rebuttal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent speech in Alipurduar. *—PTI*

HAASAN FILES RS POLL NOMINATION

Makkal Needhi Maiam President and actor Kamal Haasan, who is contesting in the Rajya Sabha Poll, declared his assets while filling nomination papers to contest for the 19 June biennial polls, on Friday

Movable assets Rs 45 cr

Immovable assets Rs 131 cr

Bank deposits Rs 2.43 cr

Criminal case 3

Liabilities Rs 49.5 cr

41st anniversary Operation Bluestar

AMRITSAR, 6 JUNE

- Radical Sikh outfit Dal Khalsa activists were seen holding placards bearing portraits of slain militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and also Khalistani flags.

Pro-Khalistan slogans were on Friday raised by supporters and activists of radical Sikh outfits at the Akal Takht, the supreme temporal seat of Sikhs, while a peaceful bandh was observed around the Golden Temple and the interior walled city on the 41st anniversary of Operation Bluestar.

Breaking a 40-year-old tradition of the annual address on the anniversary of Operation Blue Star, officiating Jathedar of Akal Takht Giani Kuldeep Singh Gargaj did not deliver the customary message to the Sikh community this time as he concluded his message in the "ardas" (prayer according to Sikh rituals) ceremony from the Akal Takht to avoid any controversy.

While concluding his address during the ardas, the Jathedar said this pious spiritual place (Golden Temple and Akal Takht) should never be a place of turmoil as everybody wants peace here.

Radical Sikh outfit Dal Khalsa activists were seen holding placards bearing portraits of slain militant leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and also Khalistani flags. *—PTI*

NOT ALLOWED AT GOVT EVENTS

No official Bharat Mata portrait: Kerala

THIRUVANAN THAPURAM, 6 JUNE

The Left government in Kerala on Friday made it clear that it was not in agreement with the use of the Bharat Mata portrait at the Environment Day event at the Raj Bhavan here, as the picture was not authorised as the official version by the Constitution or the Indian government.

Kerala Agriculture Minister P Prasad, who boycotted the event at the Raj Bhavan a day ago over the use of the portrait, said that those in constitutional offices cannot convert government programmes into political events.

A similar view was also expressed by state General Education Minister V Sivankutty, who said that the

The government's stand came a day after Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar asserted that there would be no compromise on Bharat Mata PHOTO: X

Raj Bhavan and the Governor were above politics and said that Arlekar should withdraw from the stand taken by him.

The government's stand came a day after Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar asserted that there would be no compromise on Bharat Mata.

In a mark of protest against the Governor's stand, the CPI announced that on 7 June all its branches will hoist the national flag, which is the symbol of Bharat Mata, and will plant saplings in front of it.

The campaign was announced in a statement issued by CPI state secretary Binoy Viswom.

Viswom, in an apparent reference to the Governor's stand, said the campaign was being launched in view of "attempts by certain centres of authority" to use the concept of Bharat Mata to "propagate anti-national ideas" in a manner that is "not in line with the Constitution".

He instructed party units to ensure all those who are committed to the constitutional values of democracy and secularism be included in the campaign. *–PTI*

IUML kicks up row over Bakrid holiday in Kerala

T'PURAM, 6 JUNE

The Kerala Government's decision to change Bakrid holiday triggered a political row in the state on Friday with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) accusing it of attempting to implement "communal agenda and fascism" in the state.

Originally Friday (6 June) was marked as holiday for Bakrid. However, following the reports that the festival would be celebrated on Saturday across the state, on Thursday, the Kerala government announced that Saturday, 7 June, will be a public holiday for Bakrid.

As per the change, government also declared that June 6 (Friday) would be a regular

working day.

Officials, in a statement, said the change was made to ensure the holiday aligns with the actual date of celebration observed by the people.

However, IUML and a few Muslim outfits criticised the government's move to change the holiday. Responding to these criticisms, government on Thursday night, announced that all educational institutions, including profesional colleges, would be closed on Friday.

However, it failed to pacify the ruffled feathers.

IUML, the second largest coalition partner in the Congress-led UDF, said though Friday was declared a public holiday earlier, the Left government cancelled it for no reason.

The government's act was amounted to provoke the minority community, senior IUML leader P M A Salam charged. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

26/11 conspiracy: Rana's custody extended till 9 July

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana till 9 July. The order was passed after Rana appeared before the court through video conference after expiry of his judicial custody granted earlier. The judge sought a status report from Tihar on Rana's after his lawyer raised concerns about his wellbeing.

He was brought to India after the US Supreme Court dismissed his review plea against his extradition to India. The court sent him to judicial custody last month.

On November 26, 2008, a group of 10 Pakistani terrorists carried out coordinated attacks in Mumbai, killing 166 people and injuring many more. *—PTI*

Teacher suspended over school name in Urdu

BIJNOR, 6 JUNE

A head teacher in Uttar Pradesh's Bijnor district has been suspended after a video surfaced showing the name of a government primary school written in both Hindi and Urdu. The video prompted a reaction from the District Basic Education Officer, who stated the dual language signage contravened language regulations.

The school in question is Primary School Sahanpur II. Following the video's circulation, head teacher Rafat Khan was suspended, and an inquiry has been initiated. Khan defended herself, claiming the footage was outdated, as the Urdu text had been removed during recent renovations at the beginning of the academic session. The Basic Education Officer confirmed that further actions will depend on the inquiry's findings, reinforcing that adherence to language regulations is crucial in educational institutions. *—PTI*

Goa police seize ₹10 cr whale vomit, 3 arrested

PANAJI, 6 JUNE

Police in South Goa have recovered 5.75 kg of whale vomit, or ambergris, valued at approximately Rs 10 crore from three individuals.

The seizure took place in Sanguem village on 5 June, following a tip-off.

Ambergris, a waxy substance used predominantly in the perfume industry, is produced in the intestines of sperm whales. The trade or possession of any byproducts from these whales is illegal. The accused were identified as Sainath Shet, 50 and Ratnakant Karapurkar, 55, both from Goa, and Yogesh Redkar, 40, from Sindhudurg, Maharashtra. A probe is on into source of the ambergris and the public have been urged to report any illegal wildlife trade activities. *—PTI*

8 militants held in Manipur, arms recovered

IMPHAL, 6 JUNE

Security forces have arrested eight militants from various banned outfits in operations across Imphal West and Bishnupur districts. Three active members of the proscribed United People's Party of Kangleipak were detained in the Ghari Makha Leikai area of Imphal West. Four more individuals linked to Peoples' Liberation Army were apprehended in Taothong Khunou and Bishnupur. One cadre of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kangleipak (PREPAK, Pro) was arrested from Wangoo Ahallup Mayai Leikai in Bishnupur. Authorities recovered various arms and ammunition during the operations, including pistols and bullets.A police spokesman stated, "Intelligence-led search operations are ongoing to apprehend those involved in extortion activities across the state." *—PTI*

ACTIVE COVID CASES IN INDIA CROSS 5,000-MARK

Infection variant growing milder, occasional surge likely

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

India's active Covid case tally crossed the 5,000 mark with Kerala remaining the most affected state followed by Gujarat, West Bengal and Delhi, according to the Union Health Ministry.

All states were to ensure availability of oxygen, isolation beds, ventilators and essential medicines. There are 5,364 active cases in India, with the disease claiming four lives in the last 24 hours. Most cases are mild and being managed under home care.

Since January, 55 deaths have been reported in India.

Review meetings chaired by Sunita Sharma, director general of health services (DGHS) with representatives from various central agencies and government hospitals and representatives from states and Union Territories were held to evaluate the current situation,

Testing was recommended for all admitted severe acute respiratory illness cases and 5 per cent of influenza like illness cases as per guidelines. Positive SARI samples were sent for whole genome sequencing through the ICMR VRDL network.

Medical officials set up beds for Covid-19 patients amid an uptick in coronavirus infections, at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, 55 people tested positive for Covid-19 in West Bengal in the last 24 hours, pushing the total number of active cases to 596, with one death reported.

Delhi recorded 30 new cases, taking the active count to 592. The disease claimed seven lives since January.

Meanwhile, scientists said that Covid-19 was growing milder with time, though an occasional surge was expected because the virus causing it was endemic and constantly evolving.

Waning immunity combined with seasonal factors such as temperature extremes led to increased infection.

People with pre-existing illnesses and those older than 65 should follow standard precautions.

The sub-variants can bind themselves to human cells, despite pre-existing antibodies created in response to a prior infection or vaccination.

Experts also emphasized on making next generation vaccines and masks available to all. *— PTI*

RAZING HISTORY DOWN

A nearly century-old railway institute building being demolished in Danapur railway station in Patna, Bihar, due to a road project *PHOTO: PTI*

UP rape accused killed in police encounter

LUCKNOW, 6 JUNE

A 26-year-old man, Deepak Verma, accused of raping a two-and-a-half-year-old girl, died from gunshot wounds following an encounter with police in Lucknow's Alambagh area early on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central Zone) Ashish Srivastava reported that Verma was wanted in connection with the assault, which was reported by the girl's parents living near a metro station on Thursday. Following the filing of a complaint, police established five investigative teams and announced a reward of Rs 1 lakh for any information leading to Verma's arrest.

Police reviewed CCTV footage from the metro station and identified Verma, who allegedly lured the child before committing the crime behind a lift. Upon receiving intelligence about his attempted escape late Thursday, officers confronted Verma, who allegedly opened fire. In the ensuing exchange, he sustained serious injuries and was taken to Lokbandhu Hospital, where he later succumbed to his wounds.

Meanwhile, the victim is under medical care at King George Medical University, where her condition is reported as critical. Verma had been working as a water vendor before the incident. *—PTI*

Northeast flood situation grim, over 5.6 lakh people affected

Villagers being shifted to a safer place from a flood-affected area at Bura Mayang in Morigaon district, Assam *PHOTO: PTI*

GUWAHATI/GANGTOK/ AIZAWL, 6 JUNE

The flood situation in Assam continued to be critical with over 5.6 lakh people reeling under the deluge in 16 districts, an official bulletin said on Friday.

The toll in this year's floods and landslides stands at 21, with two more deaths reported on Thursday. Wildlife has also been affected with nearly 70 per cent of the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon district facing inundation, an official said.

SIKKIM: Meanwhile, rescue teams evacuated 17 out of the 64 tourists stranded at Chaten in north Sikkim, as operations to bring them back from the landslide-hit area resumed on Friday morning, officials said. The rescued tourists were brought to Pakyong by a helicopter, they said.

"A helicopter successfully carried out the first evacuation of the day, airlifting 17 individuals from Chaten to Greenfield Airport, Pakyong," an official said.

MIZORAM: The Mizoram government has urged people to harvest rainwater following extensive damage to pipelines and pumping systems caused by continuous heavy rain and landslides. The state's Public Health Engineering (PHE) department has said that Aizawl may face water scarcity as water could not be pumped due to high turbidity and flooding of the Tlawng river, the state capital's primary water source. *—PTI*

Mithi river case: ED raids actor Morea, others

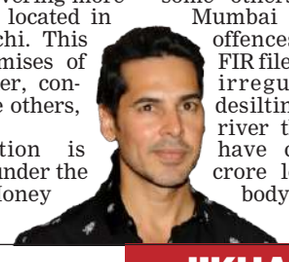
MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday conducted searches at the premises of actor Dino Morea and some others in Maharashtra apart from some locations in Kerala as part of a money laundering investigation linked to the Mithi river desilting "scam", official sources said.

The fraud is alleged to have caused a Rs 65 crore loss to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).

The raids are covering more than 15 premises located in Mumbai and Kochi. This includes the premises of Morea, his brother, contractors and some others, the sources said.

The investigation is being conducted under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, they said.



The ED case against certain officials of the BMC and some others stems from a Mumbai Police economic offences wing (EOW) FIR filed to probe alleged irregularities in desilting of the Mithi river that is alleged to have caused a Rs 65 crore loss to the civic body. *—PTI*

GUJARAT MAN DONATES DIAMOND CROWN, GOLD TO AYODHYA RAM TEMPLE

AYODHYA, 6 JUNE

A prominent diamond merchant from Gujarat has generously donated a collection of exquisite ornaments, including 11 crowns and a golden bow and arrow, to the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust in Ayodhya, officials from the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) have announced.

Mukesh Patel, the owner of jewellery firm Green Lab based in Surat, presented a variety of intricately crafted items made from diamonds, gold, silver, and rubies. According to Dinesh Newadia, the national treasurer of the VHP, the donation comprises 11 diamond crowns, 30 kilograms of silver, 300 grams of gold, and numerous rubies.

In addition to the crowns, Patel's contribution includes necklaces, earrings, forehead

tilaks, four large and three small bows representing the four brothers from the Ramayana, four quivers, three ceremonial maces, and fly whisks. The valuable items were transported to Ayodhya via a specially chartered aircraft, highlighting the significance of the gift. This comes shortly after the consecration of Raja Ram in eight newly constructed temples within the Ram Janmabhoomi complex. *—PTI*

Indian, Chinese top diplomats meet to discuss bilateral ties

BEIJING, 6 JUNE

Top diplomats from India and China discussed bilateral relations to implement the consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries last year, the foreign ministry here said on Friday.

The meeting between Indian Ambassador to China, Pradeep Kumar Rawat and China's Vice Foreign Minister Sun, Weidong on 5 June is the first diplomatic engagement between the two countries post Operation Sindoor.

Both sides expressed their willingness to work together to earnestly implement the important consensus.

They were working out ways to promote cultural exchanges and mutually beneficial cooperation and properly manage differences.

The two countries are also finalising preparations to resume the Kailash Manasarovar Yatra in Tibet for the Indian pilgrims, which would be among the steps initiated by the after normalising the relations after over four-year long military standoff in eastern Ladakh.

The Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is set to take place from June to August via two routes -- Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand and Nathu La in Sikkim.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping during their meeting at Russia's Kazan in 2024 agreed to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms.

The meeting also took place amid growing concerns in India over China's export controls on the rare earth metals.

China accounts for 61 per cent of global mined rare earth production, but controls 92 per cent of the global output.

Rare earths are a group of metals consisting of 17 elements. *—PTI*

SC: Anticipatory bail requires careful judicial scrutiny

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Supreme Court has set aside anticipatory bail granted to four accused in a 2023 murder case, criticising the Patna High Court for a "cryptic" order lacking judicial reasoning. A three-judge bench said serious offences under IPC Sections 302 and 307 require careful judicial scrutiny. The case involved the fatal assault of the appellant's father during a dispute over a pathway. The court ordered the accused to surrender within eight weeks. *—PTI*

SC declines urgent plea over Eid's animal slaughter

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

The Supreme Court on Friday declined an urgent hearing on a plea challenging the Bombay High Court's order allowing animal slaughter during Eid-ul-Azha and Urs at a dargah within Maharashtra's protected Vishalgad Fort.

The petition cited a state ban on slaughter in protected areas. However, the high court had permitted it in a privately-owned enclosed space, as done last year. The bench remarked that various religious activities occur at protected sites and questioned the urgency, calling the plea potentially infructuous. *—PTI*

The mangled remains of the car involved in accident. (Inset) Malayalam actor Tom Chacko's father CP Chacko *PHOTO: PTI*

ACTOR SHINE TOM CHACKO'S FATHER DIES IN ROAD ACCIDENT

T'PURAM/CHENNAI, 6 JUNE

Malayalam actor Shine Tom Chacko's father died in a road accident near Dharmapuri in Tamil Nadu on Friday morning when the family was travelling to Bengaluru.

The actor suffered a fracture to his left arm, while his brother mother and the driver of the car suffered minor injuries.

The incident occurred on the national highway from Salem to Bengaluru when the vehicle Chacko's family was travelling in, tried to overtake a lorry

The lorry suddenly changed lanes and the car rammed into it from behind and the actor's father, C P Chacko, died on the spot, the officer said.

The car's front portion was badly damaged in the accident.

Visuals on TV showed Chacko receiving treatment at a government hospital in Dharmapuri with his left arm in a sling. Some of Chacko's female co-stars alleged that he had behaved inappropriately under the influence of drugs. He was arrested, and released on bail in a drugs case after he allegedly fled from a Kochi hotel during a raid by a district anti-narcotic special action force team. *—PTI*

J'KHAND HOSPITAL FACES PROBE

Nurses rule still-birth; woman delivers healthy baby

HAZARIBAG, 6 JUNE

The Hazaribag district administration has ordered an inquiry, after a woman in labour was allegedly denied admission to a government hospital, where nurses declared that her baby had died in the womb, but she later delivered a boy at a private medical facility.

Manisha Devi's husband claimed that she travelled around 120 km with him from Chalkusha Block to reach the Sheikh Bhikhari Medical College and Hospital in Hazaribag in Jharkhand on 4 June, only to be told by the nurses that her haemoglobin level was low and the foetus was already dead.

Not losing hope, her husband Vinod Sao rushed Manisha to a private hospital in the district, where she gave

- Deputy Commissioner of Hazaribag, Shashi Prakash Singh, on Friday directed the superintendent of Sheikh Bhikari Medical College and Hospital to initiate an inquiry to probe the incident

birth to a healthy baby boy.

"I thank doctors at the St Columba's Mission Hospital for the safe delivery of my child," Sao said.

Deputy Commissioner of Hazaribag, Shashi Prakash Singh, on Friday directed the superintendent of Sheikh Bhikari Medical College and Hospital to initiate an inquiry to probe the incident.

"Government hospitals are meant to provide the best treatment at low cost to patients, which was reportedly denied here. I have directed the hospital authorities to set up an inquiry committee in this regard," Singh said.

Pravin Kumar, the owner of Sreenivas Mangalam Trust that operates the private hospital, said Manisha gave birth to the child after undergoing a series of tests at the medical facility, the reports of which were satisfactory.

"Both the mother and the baby boy are safe," Kumar said. *—PTI*

EID AL-ADHA

Members of the Dawoodi Bohra community offer prayers on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha at Hyderi Mosque, in Bhopal, on Friday. Eid Al-Adha or Bakrid is the second holiest festival of Islams. On Bakrid, celebration and observance are carried out for three days, which is known as the Tashreeq days
PHOTO: PTI

Hajj and the festival that follows it

Once a year, large numbers of Muslim pilgrims converging on Saudi Arabia unite in religious rituals and acts of worship as they perform the Hajj, one of the pillars of Islam.

They fulfill a religious obligation, immersing themselves in what can be a spiritual experience of a lifetime for them and a chance to seek God's forgiveness and the erasure of past sins.

Here's a look at the pilgrimage and its significance to Muslims.

What is the Hajj?

The Hajj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia and involves a series of religious rituals. It's required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it. Some Muslims make the journey more than once.

It is also one of the five pillars of Islam, in addition to the profession of faith, prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

When is the Hajj

The Hajj occurs once a year during the lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, the 12th and final month of the Islamic calendar year. This year, the Hajj will start on 4 June.

When the Hajj falls during the summer months, the intense heat can be especially challenging. Amid extreme high temperatures last year, more than 1,300 people died during the Hajj, Saudi authorities announced then. The country's health minister said at the time that the vast majority of the fatalities were unauthorized pilgrims who walked long distances under the sun.

What's the significance of the Hajj to muslims?

For pilgrims, performing the Hajj fulfils a religious obligation and is also a deeply spiritual experience. It's seen as a chance to seek God's forgiveness for past sins, to grow closer to God and to walk in the footsteps of prophets.

Communally, the Hajj unites Muslims of diverse races, ethnicities, languages and economic classes from around the world in performing religious rituals and acts of worshipping God at the same time and place. This leaves many feeling a sense of unity, connection, humility and equality. Pilgrims also show up with their own personal appeals, wishes and experiences.

Many pilgrims bring with them prayer requests from family and friends that they would like to be said on their behalf. Some spend years hoping and praying to one day perform the Hajj or saving up money and waiting for a permit to embark on the trip.

Ahead of the journey, preparations may include packing various essentials for the physically demanding trip, seeking tips from those who've performed the pilgrimage before, attending lectures or consulting other educational material on how to properly perform a series of Hajjj rituals as well as spiritually readying one

Muslim pilgrims cast stones at pillars in the symbolic stoning of the devil in Mina near the holy city of Makkah, Saudi Arabia, on Friday
PHOTO: PTI

What are some of the rituals that pilgrims perform?

Pilgrims make the intention to perform the Hajjj and they enter a state of "ihram." Being in ihram includes abiding by certain rules and prohibitions. For instance, men are not to wear regular sewn or stitched clothes that encircle the body, such as shirts, during ihram. Instead, there are simple ihram cloth garments for men; scholars say the purpose is to discard luxuries and vanity, shed worldly status symbols and immerse the pilgrim in humility and devotion to God.

A spiritual highlight of the Hajj for many is standing on the plain of Arafat, where pilgrims praise God, plead for forgiveness and make supplications. Many raise their hands in worship with tears streaming down their faces.

Other rituals include performing "tawaf," circumambulating, or circling the Kaaba in Mecca counterclockwise seven times. The Kaaba, a cube-shaped structure, is the focal point toward which Muslims face during their daily prayers from anywhere in the world.

Among other rituals, pilgrims also retrace the path of Hagar, or Hajjar, the wife of Prophet Ibrahim, Abraham to Jews and Christians, who Muslims believe ran between two hills seven times searching for water for her son.

What is eid al-adha?

Eid al-Adha, or the "Feast of Sacrifice," is the Islamic holiday that begins on the 10th day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, during the Hajj.

A joyous occasion celebrated by Muslims around the world, Eid al-Adha marks Ibrahim's test of faith and his willingness to sacrifice his son as an act of submission to God. During the festive holiday, Muslims slaughter sheep or cattle and distribute some meat to poor people. —PTI

SALAR سالار

Trump, Musk break up, and Washington on edge

Maybe it was always going to end this way, with two billionaires angrily posting about each other on social media, fingers flying across pocket-sized screens as their incandescent feud burned hotter by minute.

But even if the finale was predictable, that didn't make it any less shocking. After long months when Donald Trump and Elon Musk appeared united in their chaotic mission to remake Washington, their relationship imploded this week like a star going supernova.

It began with Musk complaining about the centerpiece of Trump's legislative agenda, which the president at first took in stride. Eventually Trump let slip that he was disappointed in his former adviser, prompting Musk to unleash a flood of insults and taunts.

He accused Trump of betraying promises to cut federal spending, shared a suggestion that the president should be impeached and claimed without evidence that the government was concealing information about his association with infamous pedophile Jeffrey Epstein.

Trump, not one to slouch from a fight, could hold back no longer. He posted that Musk had been "wearing thin," that he had "asked him to leave" his administration, that the tech titan had "gone CRAZY."

Maybe, Trump threatened, he should save taxpayer money by cancelling government contracts and subsidies for Musk's companies. On and on it went, as liberals savored the spectacle of their most despised political opponents clawing at each other's digital throats and conservatives reeled at the prospect of having to pick sides.

The question now is whether Trump and Musk find some way to step back from a battle that is tearing apart one of the most consequential relationships in modern American politics. If they don't, there's little telling how far the fallout could spread from a collision between the world's most powerful man and its wealthiest.

At stake are the future of Musk's companies, including electric automaker Tesla and rocket manufacturer SpaceX; government programs that rely on the billionaire entrepreneur's technology; legislation for advancing tax cuts and Trump's other priorities in Congress; Republican chances in next year's midterm elections; and an entire political ecosystem that has orbited around Trump and Musk's deteriorating partnership.

"It's like India and Pakistan," said Republican Rep Ryan Zinke of Montana, referring to two nuclear-armed nations that recently skirmished along their border. "It just escalates and neither one of them seem to back down and understand the strength of each other."

Trump and Musk were always an odd pairing, with contrasting world views and deep generational and stylistic differences.

Each has sought more power to accomplish existential quests. Trump assails the federal "deep state" that resisted him during his first term, while Musk warns about the country going bankrupt from excessive spending and promotes an interplanetary future powered by his rocket technology.

Musk endorsed Trump after the Republican candidate was nearly assassinated in Butler, Pennsylvania, and he began spending millions to support him.

Trump rarely tolerates sharing the spotlight, but he seemed enamored with his powerful backer, mentioning him in stump speeches and welcoming him onstage at rallies.

After the election, Musk was a fixture around Mar-a-Lago, posing for photos with Trump's family, joining them for dinner, sitting in on meetings. Instead of growing tired of his "first buddy," Trump made plans to bring Musk along to Washington, appointing him to lead a cost-cutting initiative known as the Department of Government Efficiency.

Musk tried to establish himself as the president's omniscient and omnipresent adviser. He held court in Cabinet meetings, slept over in the Lincoln Bedroom and helped himself to caramel ice cream from the White House kitchen.

The federal bureaucracy practically trembled before Musk, who oversaw layoffs and downsizing with his team of acolytes and engineers embedded in various agencies.

Musk appeared thrilled at his opportunity to tinker with the government and exulted in his bromance with Trump, posting on 7 Feb that he loved the president "as much as a straight man can love another man."

But cracks were emerging, especially as Trump pursued tariffs that could raise costs for Musk's businesses

Trump started signaling that it was time for him to leave even though Musk said he would be willing to stay.

Shortly before announcing his departure, Musk said he was "disappointed" by legislation that Trump called the "big beautiful bill" because it would increase the deficit. The measure includes tax cuts, more money for border security and changes to Medicaid that would leave fewer people with health insurance.

"Elon is really not leaving," Trump said. "He's going to be back and forth." Musk said, "I'll continue to be visiting here and be a friend and adviser to the president."

It's hard to imagine that now. —*PTI*

Elon Musk and Donald Trump were always an odd pairing, with contrasting world views and deep generational and stylistic differences
PHOTO: X

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

Gaza marks start of Eid with outdoor prayers amid food scarcity

Palestinians across the war-ravaged Gaza Strip marked the start of one of Islam's most important holidays with prayers outside destroyed mosques and homes early Friday, with little hope the war with Israel will end soon.

With much of Gaza in rubble, men and children were forced to hold the traditional Eid al-Adha prayers in the open air and with food supplies dwindling, families were having to make do with what they could scrape together for the three-day feast.

"This is the worst feast that the Palestinian people have experienced because of the unjust war against the Palestinian people," said Kamel Emran after attending prayers in the southern city of Khan Younis. "There is no food, no flour, no shelter, no mosques, no homes, no mattresses ... The conditions are very, very harsh."

The Islamic holiday begins on the 10th day of the Islamic lunar month of Dhul-Hijja, during the Hajjj season in Saudi Arabia.

For the second year, Muslims in Gaza were not able to travel to Saudi Arabia to perform the traditional pilgrimage.

The war broke out on 7 October, 2023 when Hamas-led militants launched a surprise attack on Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 hostages. They are still holding 56 hostages, around a third of them believed to be alive, after most of the rest were released in ceasefire agreements or other deals.

Israeli forces have rescued eight living hostages from Gaza and recovered dozens of bodies.

Since October 2023, Israel has killed more than 54,000 Palestinians in its military campaign, primarily women and children, according to the Gaza Health Ministry which does not distinguish between civilians or combatants in its figures.

The offensive has destroyed large parts of Gaza and displaced around 90 per cent of its population of roughly 2 million Palestinians.

After blocking all food and aid from entering Gaza for more than two months, Israel began allowing a trickle of supplies to enter for the UN several weeks ago.

But the UN says it has been unable to distribute much of the aid because of Israeli military restrictions on movements and because roads that the military designates for its trucks to use are unsafe and vulnerable to looters.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation in Rome said Thursday that Gaza's people are projected to fall into acute food insecurity by September, with nearly 5,00,000 people experiencing extreme food deprivation, leading to malnutrition and starvation.

"This means the risk of famine is really touching the whole of the Gaza Strip," Rein Paulson, director of the FAO office of emergencies and resilience, said in an interview.

Over the past two weeks, shootings have erupted nearly daily in the Gaza Strip in the vicinity of new hubs where desperate Palestinians are being directed to collect food. Witnesses say nearby Israeli troops have opened fire, and more than 80 people have been killed according to Gaza hospital officials.

Israel has accused Hamas of stealing aid and trying to block it from reaching Palestinians, and has said soldiers fired warning shots or at individuals approaching its troops in some cases.

The Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a newly formed group of mainly American contractors that Israel wants to use to replace humanitarian groups in Gaza that distribute aid in coordination with the UN, said Friday that all its distribution centres were closed for the day due to the ongoing violence.

It urged people to stay away for their own safety, and said it would make an announcement later as to when they would resume distributing humanitarian aid. —*PTI*

Palestinians gather for Eid al-Adha prayers beside the ruins of a mosque destroyed by Israeli bombardment
PHOTO: X

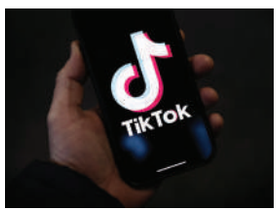


PHOTO: X

Indian-origin Singaporean fined for racial remarks

SINGAPORE, 6 JUNE

An Indian-origin blogger in Singapore was fined SGD 6,000 (about Rs 4 lakh) on Friday after he pleaded guilty to one charge of knowingly committing an act which promoted disharmony between different racial groups in the country through a post on TikTok. Manmeet Singh's post came after he received a link from an unknown person with the alleged offensive content, Channel News Asia reported. Singh, 57, then posted a commentary about the content without verifying its authenticity. In the commentary on TikTok, Singh claimed that Minister for Digital Development and Information Josephine Teo had made offensive remarks against Malays, a mostly Muslim community which accounts for about 15 per cent of Singapore's six million-plus population. *—PTI*

Militants bomb government school in NW Pakistan

PESHAWAR, 6 JUNE

A government high school was bombed early Friday in Akbari village, located in Tank district of Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police reported. The blast, which occurred in the Gul Imam police station's jurisdiction, destroyed several classrooms. No group has claimed responsibility, though splinter factions of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), known for targeting girls' education, are active in the area. More than 450 schools have been destroyed in such attacks across the province over the past decade, according to local NGOs. The violence has disrupted education for thousands, especially girls. In 2012, Malala Yousafzai was shot by Taliban militants in nearby Swat for championing girls' right to education. *—PTI*

Popular HK activist charged again under security law

HONG KONG, 6 JUNE

Prominent Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong has been charged with conspiracy to collude with foreign forces under Beijing's national security law, which critics say has stifled the city's pro-democracy movement. It is the second charge Wong faces under the sweeping law. He is already serving a four-year, eight-month sentence in a separate subversion case. Prosecutors accuse Wong, 28, of working with fellow activist Nathan Law and others to seek foreign sanctions against Hong Kong and China between July and November 2020. The offence carries a maximum sentence of life imprisonment. Wong appeared visibly thinner in court and acknowledged the charge. The case was adjourned to August. He was also arrested for suspected money laundering. *—PTI*

Interpol arrests 20 in global child abuse crackdown

LYON, 6 JUNE

Interpol has announced that 20 people have been arrested across Europe and the Americas in a major cross-border crackdown on child sexual abuse material. The operation, which began late last year and was led by Spanish police, spanned 12 countries. Seven arrests were made in Spain, including a healthcare worker accused of paying minors in Eastern Europe for explicit images, and a teacher suspected of possessing and sharing abusive content online. Authorities in Latin America detained 10 suspects across seven countries, including three in El Salvador and a teacher in Panama. Interpol said 68 additional suspects have been identified, with investigations still ongoing. *—PTI*

Musk links Trump to sex trafficking files

Says US President was not releasing the Epstein files because of his involvement in it

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: FREEPIKAI

Amid a spiralling feud with US President Donald Trump on the latest US Bill, Elon Musk claimed that Trump's name is mentioned "in the Epstein files" and added that it is the "real reason they have not been made public".

Musk stated on X, "Time to drop the really big bomb: Donal Trump is in the Epstein files. That is the real reason they have not been made public. Have a nice day, DJT." In another post on X, he said, "Mark this post for the future. The truth will come out."

Before being elected in November, Trump said that he would have "no problem" releasing files related to Epstein, something some lawmakers have demanded on social media following the alleged sex trafficker's death.

In 2024, Trump had denied any association with Epstein, The Hill reported. In a post on X, he stated, "I was never on Epstein's Plane, or at his 'stupid' Island. Strong Laws ought to be developed against AI It will be a big and very dangerous problem in the future."

Musk claimed that, "without me, Trump would have lost the election, Dems would control the House and the Republicans would be 51-49 in the Senate…Such ingratitude", Musk stated on X

Musk even conducted a poll on X, asking whether the US needs a new political party "that actually represents the 80 per cent in the middle".

Musk's dramatic intervention arrives at a pivotal moment for Trump's self-described "big, beautiful Bill", which encompasses sweeping tax reductions and expanded military expenditure. The House of Representatives approved the measure, which Musk claimed happened in the dead of night, by the narrowest of margins last month, with only three Republican members dissenting against solid Democratic resistance.

While speaking to German Chancellor Friedrich Merz Trump responded to a question about Musk's criticism of the Bill, saying, "It's about 1.6 trillion in cuts. It's the biggest tax cut. Tax, you would say, people's taxes will go way down, but it's the biggest tax cut in history… And, you know, Elon's upset because we took the EV mandate…. And, you know, they're having a hard time with the electric vehicles, and they want us to pay billions of dollars in subsidy…. I know that it disturbed him."

Trump also claimed that, Jared Isaacman, Musk recommendation to run NASA was a Democrat. "And I didn't think it was appropriate. And he happened to be a Democrat, like, totally Democrat." *—PTI*

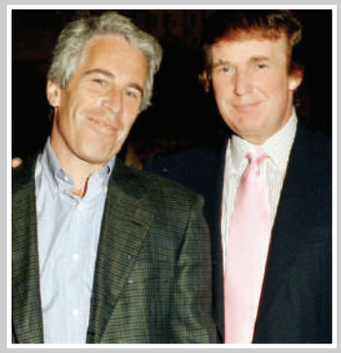
EPIC BREAKUP

- Trump took to Truth Social on Thursday to announce a plan to save money by scrapping Musk's governmental subsidies and contracts.

- Musk then posted on X that SpaceX will decommission its Dragon spacecraft, which has been transporting resources to International Space Station since 2012.
- In response to Musk saying he was disappointed in Musk opposing his "Big Beautiful Bill", Musk dropped a bombshell. He said Trump is named in the Jeffrey Epstein files. "That is the real reason they have not been made public. Have a good day."
- Trump then replied on Truth: "I don't mind Elon turning against me, but he should have done so months ago".

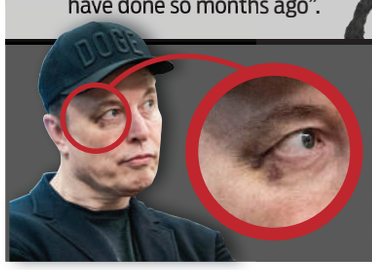
WHAT IS THE JEFFREY EPSTEIN CASE?

Jeffrey Epstein was a convicted sex offender accused of running a network of underage girls for sex. He died in prison in 2019 while awaiting trial; though it was declared death by suicide, Epstein's brother said it was a murder by the govt. Epstein was a school-teacher-turned-Wall Street financier who rose up the ranks, knowing politicians, celebrities and socialites. Epstein's private island in US Virgin Islands was known to host guests and provide them with girls for sex. Musk retweeted a post claiming Trump flew to Epstein's island at least 7 times.



Incidentally, one of the victims, then 17-year-old, Virginia Roberts had accused Prince Andrew of raping her. She was found dead on 25 April, reportedly due to suicide.

- Musk then said Trump's tariffs will cause recession in next half of the year.
- He then asked X users to vote on whether America needs a new party. At the time of publishing, 80.8% voted yes.
- Trump had earlier posted saying he asked Musk to leave after he took away his EV car mandate, which forced people to buy EVs. He says Musk went "crazy" after he was told "nobody wanted" his electric cars.



PS: Just before the bromance broke up, The New York Times reported that Elon Musk regularly used ketamine, a hallucinogenic drug, apart from numerous other drugs. Musk rejected all claims just before announcing his exit from the White House on 30 May, while appearing at the Oval Office with a black eye. He has previously said he was prescribed ketamine for depression.

Musk threatens to withdraw Dragon spacecraft

WASHINGTON, 6 JUNE

Elon Musk threatened to decommission a space capsule used to take astronauts and supplies to the International Space Station. Later on Friday, he indicated that his threat wasn't serious.

After Trump threatened to cut government contracts given to Musk's SpaceX rocket company and his Starlink internet satellite services, Musk responded via X that SpaceX "will begin decommissioning its Dragon spacecraft immediately."

The capsule, developed with the help of government contracts, is an important part of keeping the space station running.

NASA relies heavily on SpaceX's Dragon, the only US company capable of transporting crews to and from space stations.

NASA's other option would be Russia's Soyuz capsules.

The Soyuz capsules hold three people at a time. For now, each Soyuz launch carries two Russians and one NASA astronaut, and each SpaceX launch has one Russian on board under a barter system.

That way, in an emergency requiring a capsule to return, there is always someone from the US and Russian on board.

SpaceX had enabled NASA to reduce its reliance on Russia for crew transport. The Russian flights had been costing the US tens of millions of dollars per seat, for years. *—PTI*

US HIRING LIKELY SLOWED TO 1,30,000 NEW JOBS LAST MONTH

The US job market continued to slow last month, hobbled by worries over Trump's trade wars, deportations and purges of the federal workforce. The Labour Department's numbers on May hiring are expected to show that businesses, government agencies and nonprofits added 1,30,000 jobs last month.

JUDGE HOLDS HALT ON TRUMP BAN ON HARVARD FOREIGN STUDENTS

A federal judge late Thursday temporarily blocked a Trump ban on foreign students from entering the US to attend Harvard University. The university challenged it the next day, calling it an illegal retaliation for Harvard's rejection of White House demands.

Israel targets 'Hezbollah drone production'

BEIRUT/JERUSALEM/ WASHINGTON 6 JUNE

Flames and smoke following an Israeli airstrike on Dahiyeh in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon **PHOTO: PTI**

The Israeli military struck several sites in Beirut's southern suburbs that it said held underground facilities used by Hezbollah for drone production Thursday, on the eve of the Eid al-Adha holiday.

The strikes marked the first time in more than a month that Israel had struck on the outskirts of the capital and the fourth time since a US-brokered ceasefire agreement ended the latest war between Israel and the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah in November. Israel posted a warning ahead of the strikes on X announcing that it would hit eight buildings at four locations.

Israel has continued to carry out near-daily strikes in southern and eastern Lebanon since the ceasefire, which Lebanon has said are in violation of the agreement. Israeli officials say the strikes are intended to prevent Hezbollah from regrouping.

A Hezbollah official however publicly denied that there were drone production facilities at the targeted locations.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Thursday that Israel has "activated" some clans of Palestinians in Gaza in the fight against Hamas. His comments on social media were the first public acknowledgment of Israel's backing of armed Palestinian groups within Gaza, based around powerful families.

Palestinians and aid workers have accused clans of carrying out criminal attacks and stealing aid from trucks. Several have come forward in recent weeks to publicly reject any ties to Israel or involvement in looting.

Meanwhile, the Trump administration is slapping sanctions on four judges at the International Criminal Court over the tribunal's investigation into alleged war crimes by Israel in its war against Hamas in Gaza and in the West Bank. *—PTI*

4 killed in Kyiv in Russian attacks

KYIV/MOSCOW/ BRUSSELS, 6 JUNE

A Russian missile and drone attack on Kyiv on early Friday killed at least four people and injured 20 others, city mayor Vitali Klitschko said, as air raid sirens rang out during a wider combined attack across Ukraine.

Klitschko said search and rescue operations were underway at several locations.

Multiple explosions were heard in the capital, Kyiv, where falling debris sparked fires across several districts as air defence systems attempted to intercept incoming targets, said Tymur Tkachenko, head of the Kyiv City Administration.

"Our air defence crews are doing everything possible. But we must protect one another — stay safe," Tkachenko wrote on Telegram.

Meanwhile on Thursday, Russia declared the British Council an "undesirable" organisation, accusing it of acting as a cover for the UK intelligence service MI-6.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova alleged that the UK intelligence services use the British Council in operations aimed at undermining the sovereignty of countries.

"Russia's competent authorities have received information that British intelligence services use the British Council in clandestine operations aimed at eroding the sovereignty of independent countries and it engages in secret subversive activities," Zakharova said.

It is also reported that most US allies at NATO endorse President Donald Trump's demand that they invest 5 per cent of gross domestic product on their defense needs and are ready to ramp up security spending even more, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said Thursday. *—Agencies*

FEAT MADE IN 'MI:8'

Tom Cruise sets Guinness record for most burning-parachute jumps

LOS ANGELES, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: X

Hollywood superstar Tom Cruise has earned a Guinness World Record for performing the most burning parachute jumps by an individual, executing the feat 16 times during the filming of his latest movie, 'Mission: Impossible – The Final Reckoning'.

The film, which released in theatres worldwide in June, featured a daring sequence in the final moments where Cruise, a licensed skydiver, leapt from a helicopter while strapped to a parachute soaked in aviation fuel and set ablaze. He performed the stunt 16 times and after each jump, he cut away the burning parachute and deployed a backup to land safely.

"Tom doesn't just play action heroes – he is an action hero," Craig Glenday, Editor-in-Chief of Guinness World Records, said in a statement posted on the official website.

"A large part of his success can be chalked up to his absolute focus on authenticity and pushing the boundaries of what a leading man can do. It's an honour to be able to recognise his utter fearlessness with this new Guinness World Records title." *—PTI*

Japan's private lunar lander crashes into moon

TOKYO, 6 JUNE

A private lunar lander from Japan crashed while attempting a touchdown Friday, the latest casualty in the commercial rush to the moon.

The Tokyo-based company ispace declared the mission a failure several hours after communication was lost with the lander. Flight controllers scrambled to gain contact, but were met with only silence and said they were concluding the mission.

Communications ceased less than two minutes before the spacecraft's scheduled landing on the moon with a mini rover. Until then, the descent from lunar orbit seemed to be going well.

CEO and founder Takeshi Hakamada apologized to everyone who contributed to the mission, the second lunar strikeout for ispace. *—PTI*

Explosion caused by a Russian air strike on Kyiv, Ukraine **PHOTO: PTI**

RBI sees steepest rate cut in 5 yrs

Home, auto and other loans are likely to cost less as Central bank rates dip by 50 points

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

Home, auto and other loans are likely to cost less as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) cut interest rates by a larger-than-expected 50 basis points on Friday, and unexpectedly reduced the cash reserve ratio for banks to make available more money to lend in a bid to boost the economy.

The RBI's six-member monetary policy committee, headed by Governor Sanjay Malhotra and consisting of three external members, voted five to one to lower the benchmark repurchase or repo rate by 50 basis points to 5.5 per cent. It also cut the cash reserve ratio by 100 basis points to 3 per cent, adding Rs 2.5 lakh crore to already surplus liquidity in the banking system.

With the latest reduction, the RBI has now cut interest rates by a total of 100 basis points in 2025, starting with a quarter-point reduction in February - the first cut since May 2020 - and another similar-sized cut in April. The central bank, at the same time, changed its monetary policy stance from "accommodative" to "neutral" which means rates could increase or decrease in future depending on incoming data, with Malhotra stating that it may have limited space for further easing.

The repo rate is the rate at which the RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs. With the latest cut in the repo rate, all External Benchmark Lending Rates (EBLR) linked to it will come down. And if the banks fully pass on this to the borrowers, equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, auto and personal loans will decline by 50 bps. *—PTI*

RBI'S JUNE 2025 MONETARY POLICY

RBI cut its Cash Reserve Ratio by 1 per cent, which will unlock Rs 2.5 lakh crore liquidity to the banking system for lending to productive sectors of the economy. Following are the highlights of RBI's June monetary policy announced by Governor Sanjay Malhotra on Friday

- Lending rate reduced: 50 bps to 5.5%
- Monetary policy: Neutral
- Cash Reserve Ratio: 100 bpsi
- FY26 Retail inflation: 30 bps to 3.7%
- Outlook for inflation points towards benign prices across major constituents
- CAD for FY26 to remain well within sustainable level
- Foreign exchange reserves lower: USD 691.5 billion
- Next MPC meeting: 4 to 6 August

Gold prices rise by ₹144 to ₹98,018/10g

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Gold prices on Friday increased Rs 144 to Rs 98,018 per 10g in futures trade as speculators created fresh positions on a firm spot demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, gold contracts for August delivery traded higher by Rs 144 or 0.15 per cent at Rs 98,018 per 10g in a business turnover of 15,311 lots. Fresh positions built up by participants led to a rise in gold prices, analysts said. Globally, gold futures rose 0.42 per cent to USD 3,366.66 per ounce in New York. *—PTI*

Rupee rises by 11P, closes at 85.68 against USD

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

The rupee pared initial losses and appreciated 11 paise to close at 85.68 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, after the Reserve Bank cut repo rate by a higher-than-expected 50 basis points to prop up growth. Forex traders said the rupee traded on a flat-to-positive note as the RBI surprised the market with a jumbo rate cut. Besides, the rate cut supported by a phased 100 basis points CRR reduction will lower the borrowing costs and boost growth. Moreover, a surge in the domestic markets supported the rupee at lower levels with both the indices settling with gains of over 1 per cent. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit witnessed heavy volatility. It opened at 85.91, registering a fall of 12 paise over its previous close. *—PTI*

Dell India names Manish Gupta as new president

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Dell Technologies has appointed Manish Gupta as President and Managing Director for India, effective immediately. Gupta will lead the company's growth and sales efforts across the country, reporting to Peter Marrs, President of Asia Pacific Japan & Greater China (APJC). Gupta succeeds Alok Ohrie, who is leaving to focus on personal pursuits. With over 25 years in the IT sector and more than ten years in leadership roles at Dell, Gupta previously led global alliances, channel partnerships, and strategic planning for the APJC region. He also served as Vice President of the Infrastructure Solutions Group in India. Commenting on his new role, Gupta said India offers huge opportunities as businesses embrace technology for agility and competitive advantage. He looks forward to driving digital transformation and an AI-powered future with Dell's customers and partners. *—PTI*

OYO targets 44% revenue from its hotels

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

OYO, the IPO-bound global travel tech platform, expects booking revenue from its company-serviced hotels in India to rise to 44 per cent by the end of this financial year, up from 22per cent. The firm currently operates over 1,300 such hotels, mainly in its mid to premium brands including Townhouse, Capital O, Palette, and SUNDAY. OYO plans to double the number of company-serviced hotels, expanding from 124 to more than 300 cities across India. Since launching this model in FY23, it has become OYO's fastest-growing segment, initially contributing under 2per cent of booking revenue. Focused on leisure, pilgrimage, and business hubs, these hotels boast higher guest ratings of 4.6 versus the average 4.0, and occupancy rates nearly three times higher, said COO Varun Jain *—PTI*

CRYPTOCURRENCIES A THREAT TO FINANCIAL STABILITY: RBI

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

Reserve Bank of India Governor Sanjay Malhotra announced on Friday that the central bank has very little scope for further rate cuts following a significant reduction of 50 basis points, bringing the total reduction to 100 basis points since February. During a media briefing following the bi-monthly monetary policy release, Malhotra stated that future actions will be contingent on incoming data.

He highlighted a projected growth rate of 6.5 per cent and an inflation forecast of 3.7 per cent for this fiscal year, indicating limited manoeuvrability in monetary policy. The repo rate now stands at 5.5 per cent, the lowest in three years, after three consecutive cuts.

Malhotra expressed optimism that the recent rate cuts would positively affect growth, although the impact is expected to manifest primarily in the latter half of FY26. He also noted a faster rate of transmission compared to previous trends.

Additionally, the RBI has reduced its inflation forecast to 3.7 per cent and implemented a 100 basis point cut in the Cash Reserve Ratio, which will release Rs 2.5 lakh crore into the banking system, enhancing lending capacity for productive sectors. *—PTI*

There's limited room for further rate cuts, says RBI Governor

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

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1% SURGE IN INDICES

RBI pushes Sensex over 700 points

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged nearly 1 per cent on Friday, driven by a rally in rate-sensitive sectors following the Reserve Bank's jumbo rate cut of 50 basis points.

Market analysts said in light of benign inflation forecasts, RBI has taken steps to boost growth. A 50 bps repo rate cut supported by phased 100 basis points CRR cut will boost growth and lower the borrowing costs.

The policy is broadly positive for growth and investment in a challenging global macro environment, they said.

After a muted start, benchmark sensitive index Sensex and Nifty soon recovered all the early lost ground fuelled by the RBI monetary policy decision and gained over 1 per cent. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended the day higher by 746.95 points, or 0.92 per cent, to settle at 82,188.99. During the day, it surged 857.85 points, or 1.05 per cent, to 82,299.89.

The 50-share NSE Nifty reclaimed the 25,000-level and climbed 252.15 points, or 1.02 per cent, to settle at 25,003.05.

All key sectors contributed to the rally, with rate-sensitive segments such as realty, financials, and auto emerging as top gainers, closely followed by others.

Among sectoral indices, realty jumped 4.74 per cent, financial services (1.79 per cent), metal (1.56 per cent), auto (1.50 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.38 per cent), consumer durables (1.30 per cent) and bankex (1.25 per cent).

Industrials and capital goods were the only laggards.

Interest-rate-sensitive realty index jumped 4.74 per cent, while auto index went up 1.50 per cent and bankex climbed 1.25 per cent. *—PTI*

Sebi chokes Choksi funds to recover ₹2.1 crore

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Markets regulator Sebi has ordered the attachment of bank accounts and shares and mutual fund holdings of absconding diamantaire Mehul Choksi to recover dues totalling Rs 2.1 crore in a case of violation of insider trading rules in the shares of Gitanjali Gems.

The latest move followed a demand notice issued to Choksi on 15 May, warning attachment of assets as well as bank accounts if he failed to make the payment within 15 days. The demand notice came after Choksi failed to pay the fine imposed by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in January 2022 in a case of violation of insider trading rules in the shares of Gitanjali Gems Ltd.

Choksi, who was the chairman and managing director as well as part of promoter group of Gitanjali Gems, is the maternal uncle of Nirav Modi. Both are facing charges of defrauding state-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) of more than Rs 14,000 crore. Both Choksi and Modi fled India after the PNB scam came to light in early 2018.

In April, Choksi was arrested in Belgium following an extradition request by Indian probe agencies. He was located in Belgium last year when he went there for getting medical treatment. He had been staying in Antigua since 2018 after leaving India.

Modi was arrested by the Scotland Yard Police in March 2019 and is currently in jail in that country. *—PTI*

Airlines facing skewed value chain: IATA

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Airlines are grappling with a skewed value chain globally and historically, the profit margin has never crossed 5 per cent, according to IATA Chief Economist Marie Owens Thomsen.

Also, she expressed hope that any efforts to address making the airline value chain less skewed will surely be an example for other countries.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation market.

At an interaction in the national capital this week, Thomsen said the skewed value chain for the global airlines industry is also a result of legacy policies.

Thomsen is the Chief Economist & Senior Vice President Sustainability at the International Airport Transport Association (IATA), a grouping of over 350 airlines.

"Nobody sat down from the beginning and said, I'm going to create a super skewed value chain and make sure that the airlines never

make any money.

"I don't think anybody had that intent. But unfortunately, that's sort of where we've ended up. And our industry globally has never made a profit margin in excess of 5 per cent," she said. *—PTI*

India, Italy to strengthen food sector cooperation

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

India and Italy will strengthen cooperation in agriculture and food processing, and set up Joint Working Groups in the automobile and space sectors, the Minister of Commerce & Industry said in a release.

The decision was reached during a high-level meeting held between Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal, and Italy's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Antonio Tajani, in Brescia--Italy's manufacturing hub. The two leaders co-chaired the 22nd session of the India-Italy Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC), during his 2-day visit to Italy, which concluded on June 5, 2025.

The JCEC saw robust participation from senior officials, policymakers, and stakeholders from both sides in a spirit of constructive engagement and mutual ambition. *—ANI*

India grants licence to Musk's Starlink for internet service

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

Elon Musk's Starlink, which had been vying for an India licence for some time now, recently signed pacts with Jio and Bharti Airtel ***PHOTO: X***

Elon Musk's Starlink received a licence from the telecom department for providing satellite internet services in India Unlike conventional satellite services that rely on distant geostationary satellites, Starlink utilises the world's largest low Earth orbit or LEO constellation (550 km above Earth).

This constellation of LEO satellites (7,000 now but eventually set to grow to over 40,000) and its mesh delivers broadband internet capable of supporting streaming, online gaming, and video calls.

Starlink, which had been vying for an India licence for some time now, recently signed pacts with Ambani's Reliance Jio and Mittal's Bharti Airtel, which together control more than 70 per cent of the country's telecom market, to bring the US satellite internet giant's services to India.

Telecom regulator TRAI had last month recommended that satellite communication companies like Starlink pay 4 per cent of their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) as spectrum charges to the government a rate steeper than what these firms had been lobbying for. The companies that have received the licence would, however, have to wait a tad longer for commercial satcom spectrum as the Trai just recently sent its recommendations on pricing, and terms and conditions, to the government for its consideration. *—PTI*

CLASH OVER GOP BILL

Tesla stock plunges amid Musk-Trump feud

NEW YORK, 6 JUNE

Trump, Musk look to 'boost' Tesla sales, make more cars in US ***PHOTO: X***

Shares of Elon Musk's electric vehicle maker fell sharply Thursday as investors feared his dispute with President Donald Trump will hurt the company.

Tesla plunged closed down more than 14 per cent as a disagreement over the U.S. president's budget bill turned nasty. After Musk said that Trump wouldn't haven't gotten elected without his help, Trump implied that he may turn the federal government against his companies, including Tesla and SpaceX.

"The easiest way to save money in our Budget, Billions and Billions of Dollars, is to terminate Elon's Governmental Subsidies and Contracts," Trump wrote on his social messaging service Truth Social. "I was always surprised that Biden didn't do it!"

The drop on Thursday wiped out nearly USD 150 billion from Tesla's market value, partially reversing a big runup in the eight weeks since Musk confirmed that Tesla would testing an autonomous, driverless "robotaxi" service in Austin, Texas, this month.

Investors fear Trump might not be in such a rush to usher in a future of self-driving cars in the US, and that could slam Tesla because so much of its future business depends on that. "There is a fear that Trump is not going to play Mr. Nice Guy when in come to autonomous," said Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives.

Trump's threat to cut government contracts seem targeted more to another of Musk's businesses, SpaceX, his privately held rocket company that received billions of dollars to send astronauts and cargo to the International Space Station, provide launches and do other work for NASA. *—PTI*

Most Indian manufacturers invest in AI, ML: Survey

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A recent survey by Rockwell Automation reveals that an overwhelming 99 per cent of manufacturers in India have either invested in or plan to invest in artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technology. Dilip Sawhney, Managing Director of Rockwell Automation India, shared these findings, noting that this marks a significant increase from previous years—two years ago, two-thirds of organisations indicated similar intentions.

The global study, part of Rockwell Automation's 10th annual "State of Smart Manufacturing Report", involved over 1,500 manufacturers from 17 leading manufacturing countries, including India, which accounted for 5 per cent of participants. Among Indian respondents, 81 per cent cited long-term business impact as their primary motivation to adopt new technology. The report highlights cybersecurity as a growing concern, with 49 per cent of manufacturers planning to use AI for cybersecurity measures by 2025. Additionally, 94 per cent of Indian manufacturers have established formal sustainability programmes, reflecting a notable maturity in the sector. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

Olympic champ Imane Khelif skips Eindhoven event

EINDHOVEN, 6 JUNE

Olympic champion Imane Khelif is skipping the Eindhoven Box Cup in the Netherlands less than a week after World Boxing announced mandatory sex testing for all athletes. The Algerian boxer, who won gold at the Paris Games last summer amid scrutiny over her eligibility, did not register in time for the event before applications closed on Thursday. "The decision of Imane's exclusion is not ours. We regret it," tournament media director Dirk Renders told The Associated Press. The 26-year-old Khelif had intended to return to international competition at the Eindhoven tournament this weekend before World Boxing announced its new sex testing policy last Friday.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Diksha places herself in top 10 after first round

TENERIFE, 6 JUNE

Diksha Dagar got off to a strong start in Spain as she played a round of two under par 70 to finish the opening day in tied sixth place at the Tenerife Women's Open on the Ladies European Tour here. Diksha was three shots behind the leaders, Ireland's Lauren Walsh and Denmark's Sofie Kibsgaard Nielsen, who carded 5-under 67 each. This week, the Indian contingent in Spain consists of Avani Prashanth (71, T-17), Hitaashee Bakshi (72, T-28), Tvesa Malik (73, T-43), and Sneha Singh (77, T-95) in addition to Diksha. Starting her round on the back nine, Diksha picked up her first shot of the day on the 13th hole before dropping shots with consecutive bogeys on the 15th and 16th holes. —*PTI*

Saptak Talwar makes a decent start

LUCERNE, 6 JUNE

Indian golfer Saptak Talwar carded a steady two-under 69 in the opening round to lie tied 39th in the Swiss Challenge Golf Tournament here. Talwar started on the back nine and picked up birdies on the 11th, 16th, and 18th holes. He dropped his only shot of the day on the sixth hole for a card of 69 on Thursday. The 26-year-old Indian will be looking to make amends this week after missing the cut at the Challenge de Cadiz last week.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Lovlina launches boxing academy in Guwahati

GUWAHATI, 6 JUNE

Olympic bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain has unveiled her boxing academy in Barchandra in north Guwahati, and Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a grant of Rs 2 crore for its development. Set up on land purchased by Borgohain in 2021, the Lovlina Borgohain Boxing Academy, inaugurated on Wednesday, aims to provide grassroots boxers with professional infrastructure, including a 26x26 boxing ring and a fully equipped gym. The centre is Guwahati's first of its kind and will cater to youth from across Assam and the northeast.—*PTI*

Carlos Alcaraz into final after Musetti walkover

Alcaraz is the 5th-youngest player to reach 5 Grand Slam finals

PARIS, 6 JUNE

Carlos Alcaraz of Spain celebrates winning the second set tie break against Lorenzo Musetti of Italy during the Men's Singles Semi-Final match

PHOTO: X / @CARLITOSALCARAZZ

Carlos Alcaraz moved to within one victory of successfully defending his title at Roland Garros on Friday after Lorenzo Musetti retired in the fourth set of their semi-final clash.

The 22-year-old Spaniard led Musetti 4-6, 7-6(3), 6-0, 2-0 when the Italian called the match after two hours, 25 minutes. At 0-5 in the third set, Musetti called for the physio to receive treatment on his upper left leg. After that, he continued reaching for his leg, and was eventually unable to continue.

"It's never great getting through or winning a match like this," said Alcaraz in his on-court interview. "Lorenzo is a great player. He has had an incredible clay season. He is one of the few players who have achieved at least the semi-finals at all the biggest events on clay. I think just four players had done that before... I always wish him all the best, a quick recovery, and hopefully we are going to enjoy his tennis pretty soon."

Alcaraz is the fifth-youngest player to reach five Grand Slam finals in the Open Era, and the third active male player to achieve that feat after Novak Djokovic (37) and Daniil Medvedev (6).

Competing under a closed roof on Court Philippe-Chatrier, Alcaraz signalled his intent with an aggressive position from the start: He stepped inside the baseline and struck big from both wings. Yet while Musetti produced an impressive response to soak up the power and take the opener, Alcaraz stuck to his game plan and eventually delivered some of his finest shot-making en route to consecutive finals at the clay-court major.

"The first two sets were tough," said Alcaraz. "I had chances to break his serve in the match. I couldn't make the most of them. He was playing great tennis. When I won the second set, there was a little bit of relief, and then in the third set, I knew what I had to do at the beginning: Just push him to the limit and try to be aggressive. Not let him dominate the game more and just be myself. —*PTI*

Satwik-Chirag bow out of Indonesia Open

PHOTO: PTI

JAKARTA, 6 JUNE

India's top men's doubles pair Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty bowed out of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 tournament after losing to Malaysia's Man Wei Chong and Tee Kai Wun in the quarterfinals here on Friday.

The former world No. 1 Indian duo, who won the title in 2023, went down 19-21, 16-21 in a 43-minute contest against the flat-hitting Malaysian pair, who notched up their first win over the Indians in five meetings.

Satwik-Chirag's loss ended the Indian challenge in the competition.

The Indians looked rusty as they struggled with their serve and return against Man and Wee, who won the Malaysia Masters last month and the Indonesia Masters in January.

The Indians also lacked discipline in defence and anticipation, and were often put in uncomfortable positions and rushed errors throughout the match by the Malaysians.

Satwik sent a couple into the net, allowing the Malaysians to edge ahead 9-7. They went into the mid-game interval leading 11-9.

Satwik-Chirag levelled at 11-all with aggressive flat exchanges, but Man and Tee restored a 15-12 cushion. The Indians clawed back to 17-17 after the Malaysians hit the net twice, but couldn't capitalise. A quick return from Tee took the score to 19-17 before Chirag pounced on a loose net shot. However, Satwik faltered at the net again to hand the Malaysians a game point, which they converted. Switching sides, the Indians looked unsettled and trailed 3-7 early in the second game.—*PTI*

Indian compound archers crash out at WC Stage 3

ANTALYA, 6 JUNE

Madhura Dhamangaonkar

PHOTO: PTI

Indian compound archers disappointed at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 as none of them managed to reach the medal rounds in the individual category, here on Friday.

India, who finished second behind South Korea with two gold, one silver, and four bronze medals at the previous stage in Shanghai, are yet to open their medal account here. Madhura Dhamangaonkar, the fourth seed and winner of the last World Cup, was ousted in the quarterfinals by fifth-seeded Mariana Bernal of Mexico. Madhura lost 152-159 in the women's section.

Mariana was consistent throughout, while Madhura struggled to find her rhythm after an opening round of 29 out of a possible 33.

World champion Aditi Swami also exited in the last-eight stage, going down 147-152 to Mexico's second-seeded Andrea Becerra.

In the men's section, 13th seed Rishabh Yadav lost to 28th seed Nicolas Girard of France 149-157 in the quarter-finals. —*PTI*

WTC FINAL

Playing at Lord's is a huge moment for SA cricket: De Villiers

LONDON, 6 JUNE

AB de Villiers feels South Africa playing World Test Championship final against Australia at Lord's is a massive moment in the country's cricketing history.South Africa and Australia will play in the final of the third edition of the World Test Championship final from 11 to 15 June.

Australia are the defending champions."This is a massive moment for South African cricket a final at Lord's. The entire nation will be behind our team, and hopefully, we can cross the line," De Villiers told Star Sports.

De Villiers, who scored 8,765 runs including 22 centuries in 114 Tests, described South Africa's squad as a well-balanced unit and backed them to pull off an upset against Pat Cummins-led Australia."I'm excited for the challenge. It's a well-balanced side, and I'm quietly confident we can upset AustraliaI say 'upset' because they're the favourites for this ICC World Test Championship Final."However, De Villiers termed Australia as a "well-oiled machine". Australia is a very experienced, well-oiled machine of a team. It won't be easy for South Africa. But I'm quietly confident because we're going there with many in-form players and big-hearted guys who have something to prove on this stage.Lord's, with its rich history, can be daunting for first-timers in the South African squad, and De Villiers wants the nerves to settle quickly. —*PTI*

CHINA HAS BEEN ELIMINATED FROM WC CONTENTION

DOHA, 6 JUNE

China slumped out of World Cup contention before Uzbekistan and Jordan qualified for the first time, taking advantage of Asia getting double the number of guaranteed entries at the first 48-team tournament in North America next year.

Asian soccer power South Korea sealed an 11th straight appearance at the men's World Cup finals with a 2-0 win in Iraq.

In a hectic night on Thursday with a lot on the line, Australia scored late to edge already-qualified Japan 1-0 before China lost 1-0 in Indonesia.

For Uzbekistan, a 0-0 draw against the United Arab Emirates was enough to take the second automatic qualification spot in Group A behind Iran.

With Asia now having eight guaranteed qualifiers after just four for the 2022 edition in Qatar Uzbekistan was a likely contender to step up. —*PTI*

WHO HAS QUALIFIED FOR 2026 WC

THE THREE HOST COUNTRIES AUTOMATICALLY QUALIFY. HOST NATIONS: UNITED STATES, MEXICO, CANADA

- Asia: Japan (qualified on 20 March)
- Iran (qualified on 25 March)
- Jordan (qualified on 5 June)
- South Korea (qualified on 5 June)
- Uzbekistan (qualified on 5 June)
- Oceania: N Z (qualified on 24 March)
- South America: Argentina (qualified on March 25)
- Iran (qualified on 25 March)

Indonesia's Thom Haye, right, celebrates with his teammates after their victory over China

PHOTO: X

Piyush Chawla announces retirement from cricket

MUMBAI, 6 JUNE

Indian leg spinner Piyush Chawla, who was part of India's victorious 2007 T20 World Cup and 2011 ODI World Cup winning squads, announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Friday.

The third-highest wicket-taker in Indian Premier League (IPL) history announced his decision by releasing an official statement on Instagram.

Announcing his retirement, Chawla expressed gratitude for his cricketing journey, stating, "After more than two decades on the field, the time has come to bid adieu to the beautiful game." He extended heartfelt thanks to his coaches, family, and the cricketing bodies that supported him throughout his career.

The 38-year-old played for Punjab Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders, Chennai Super Kings, and Mumbai Indians, taking 192 wickets in 192 matches. —*PTI*

Piyush Chawla

PHOTO: PTI

GULIYEV TO BE STRIPPED OF 2012 OLYMPIC MEDAL

LONDON, 6 JUNE

Ekaterina Guliyev is set to lose the 800 metres silver medal she won for Russia at the 2012 Olympics after the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) dismissed her appeal against a four-year doping ban, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) said on Friday.

Guliyev, who competed for Russia before switching allegiance to Turkey, was banned for two years in April 2024 for the period from March 2023 for the use of a prohibited substance, with the AIU disqualifying her results from July 17, 2012, until October 20, 2014.

The 2012 Olympics were held from 27 July to 12 August. Competing as Ekaterina Poistogova, she finished third in the 2012 Olympic final.

But Guliyev was upgraded to silver when Russian winner Mariya Savinova was found guilty of doping offences before she was also banned for doping.

"In reaching its judgement, CAS upheld the decision to disqualify the 34-year-old's results from July 17, 2012, to October 20, 2014, confirming the loss of her reallocated Olympic silver medal," the AIU said in a statement.

"World Athletics and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are now proceeding with the next steps."

World Athletics' competition department will now disqualify her results and then notify the IOC. The IOC may then proceed with the reallocation of Olympic medals, with Kenyan Pamela Jelimo set to be awarded the silver while American Alysia Montano will be moved up to the bronze medal position. —*PTI*

Yamal makes Ballon d'Or 'statement' in Spain win

STUTTGART, 6 JUNE

Lamine Yamal won the battle of Ballon d'Or contenders by scoring twice as Spain eclipsed France 5-4 in their Nations League semifinal.

The 17-year-old Yamal outshone French counterparts Desire Doue and Ousmane Dembele on Thursday as Spain initially ran riot against Didier Deschamps' tired-looking team to book its place in Sunday's final against Portugal. Portugal defeated host nation Germany 2-1 on Wednesday.

Thursday's game had been billed as a contest between young stars, but it was clear that Paris Saint-Germain's Champions League win in Munich on Saturday had added more weight to French legs, with PSG stars Doué and Dembélé disappointing. It was the highest-scoring game in the Nations League's short history, but three of the four French goals came after Yamal had made it 5-1. —*PTI*

TITLE WITH CARLSEN

Gukesh overcomes Wei Yi challenge

STAVANGER, 6 JUNE

Reigning world champion D Gukesh crossed another hurdle, beating China's Wei Yi in the ninth and penultimate round to earn three full points and emerge as a top contender, along with Norwegian star Magnus Carlsen, for the prestigious Norway Chess title here.

With one round to go, Gukesh is placed second on 14.5 points, while five-time world champion Carlsen, who fought back from a losing position to defeat American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana and earn full points, is just half a point ahead in the six-player double round-robin tournament on Thursday.

Gukesh will take on American Grandmaster Fabiano Caruana, while Carlsen will play Arjun Erigaisi in the deciding 10th round, with both hoping to prove a point in one-upmanship by claiming the title and a USD 69,000 prize purse.

If defending champion Carlsen wins, it will be his seventh Norway Chess title, dating back to 2016, while Gukesh would be hoping for his maiden triumph in two outings here. Another American GM, Hikaru Nakamura, on 13 points, has an outside chance, provided the other results go in his favour. Nakamura left Arjun Erigaisi high and dry, crushing the Indian's challenge in the Armageddon tie-break after steering the game toward a draw, though both had more than 40 minutes on the clock.

Gukesh looked more assured and refreshed after the second rest day on Wednesday and forced his Chinese opponent to resign on the 40th move. —*PTI*

D Gukesh and Magnus Carlsen

PHOTO: X